



Greensboro Solid Waste Commission Question Response Summary

January, 2014

City of Greensboro Solid Waste Commission

Question Response Summary: November 20, 2013 Presentation

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“Will this work in a community like ours? We’re different.”

We have successfully implemented WasteZero Trash Metering™ programs across a wide variety of communities, including several that have demographics similar to those of Greensboro.

Selected WasteZero Trash Metering™ Communities ^{1,2}	2011 Total Population	% 65 Years and Over	% Non-English Native Language	Median Household Income	% Families Below Poverty Line	% Dwellings with 5+ Units
Greensboro, NC	273,425	11.5%	13.2%	\$41,973	18.4%	37.2%
Worcester, MA	181,045	11.7%	32.4%	\$45,036	15.0%	28.1%
Plantation, FL	89,955	13.5%	27.1%	\$66,435	5.3%	33.6%
Binghamton, NY	47,376	5.9%	13.6%	\$30,702	20.4%	22.3%
Malden, MA	59,450	11.8%	47.9%	\$56,347	9.8%	31.6%

¹US Census Bureau. 2010. American Fact Finder. Demographic Profile: Table DP1.

²US Census Bureau. 2010. American Fact Finder. ACS 5-year estimates: Tables DP02-04.

“Does illegal dumping happen?”

Overwhelmingly, studies show and communities report that increased illegal dumping is more of a perceived, rather than actual barrier, based in fear more than in reality.

- PAYT is not the culprit.
 - Pre-existent “illegal dumps” rarely increase with PAYT.
 - Bulky waste and non-residential materials comprise most illegal dumping and are not in response to PAYT.
- Any increases are temporary.
 - Communities that report increased illegal dumping after implementing PAYT also report that it returns to pre-PAYT levels within 30 to 90 days.
 - Modest enforcement at the program’s outset tends to make incidents a non-issue.
- Combatting illegal dumping is straightforward—regardless of the cause.
 - A bulky waste program
 - Local management
 - Public education
 - Fair enforcement
 - Partnering with the right program provider

“Have other PAYT communities experienced illegal dumping?”

Illegal dumping is not only a non-issue in the vast majority of PAYT communities, but in many, the number of illegal dumping incidents actually improved.

*“Many solid waste managers have expressed a fear that residents may resort to illegal dumping in commercial waste bins or public trash cans if charged a fee for waste disposal. Studies of communities... around the nation with PAYT programs indicate that increased **illegal dumping is NOT a problem** in most communities.”*

*Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection,
“Pay-As-You-Throw Basics for Municipalities”*

*“In fact, **illegal dumping is actually less of a problem now** due to the provision of new services, including a free bulky waste collection and an annual hazardous household products collection day.”*

Bob Fiore, DPW, Worcester, MA

*“**It was an instant success** and all the things people said could happen and would happen – **illegal dumping, throwing of trash across the city – never happened.** We went from recycling 2% of our waste to 38% in one week.”*

Bob Moylan, 20-year Commissioner of Public Works, Worcester, MA

Virtually all of the communities that report an increase of illegal dumping after implementing PAYT also report that illegal dumping returns to pre-PAYT levels within one to three months.

*Econservation Institute
“Fact Sheet: Pay-As-You-Throw and Illegal Dumping”*

*Universities nationwide, including Harvard and others, have studied the illegal dumping question. All have concluded: **The experience does not support the concern.**¹*

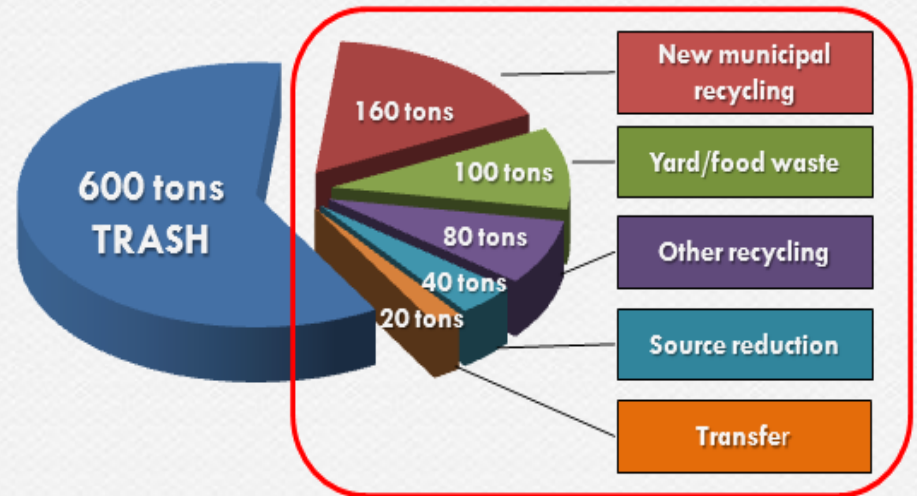
80% of illegal dumping is that of commercial material—not residential.

¹Bender, Briggs, DeWitt. “Toward statewide unit pricing in Massachusetts: Influencing the Policy Cycle.” DSIA Discussion Paper 94-01; Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, January 1994.

PAYT means “missing garbage.” Where did it go?

Let's assume that after adopting PAYT, a city reduces its trash tonnage from 1000 tons a month to 600 tons. What really happened to those 400 tons?

- Once WasteZero Trash Metering™ is in place, residents begin composting and no longer throw out yard waste in trash bags—that accounts for 100 tons right there!
- They get savvier about recycling electronics, taking used items to the Goodwill, and reusing—another 80 tons!
- They even get smarter about reducing the amount of trash they throw out from the start—the “reduce” part of the “Reduce/Reuse/Recycle” equation.



“What about ‘dirty recycling?’ Won’t folks just toss trash into the recycling bin?”

Like illegal dumping, the concern over deliberate tossing of trash into recycling bins is more of a perceived, rather than actual barrier, based in fear more than in reality.

- **It’s all about resident education.**

Most people don’t toss trash into their recycling bins deliberately. Typically the “dirty recycling” that occurs is simply due to a lack of education about or a misunderstanding around items that *can be recycled*. Once educated and practiced, residents rarely have problems determining the right container for their trash and recycling.

- **WasteZero provides that education.**

WasteZero works to help the municipality educate its residents around what can and can’t be recycled. For all partner municipalities we provide education via

- A customized municipal website
- A customized, 24/7 toll-free information line
- An online resident education library

- **As a last resort, municipalities may resort to fining for enforcement.**

This rarely happens, but it may be necessary because recycling shipments that are contaminated with food and textiles, among other prohibited items, can be a major problem for the materials recovery and sorting facilities.

“Buy bags *and* pay taxes? Isn’t that a double tax?”

- With WasteZero’s Trash Metering™ programs, the financial burden on households doesn’t have to be increased at all. In fact, those costs can be reduced.
- PAYT gives households the power to set their own waste budget. With a flat fee buried in council tax, families and individuals had no control over the costs of their own waste.
- For this to work and be politically acceptable, PAYT can be accompanied by a corresponding reduction in local property taxes or flat fees, specifically by the amount that unit-based fees are expected to generate.

More in Return™: Another Option		
	PAYT	PAYT/ More-In- Return
Residents pay out of pocket for bags	✓	✓
Economic incentives still exist (avoiding bag costs means less solid waste disposed)	✓	✓
Residents get their bag money back		✓
Everyone gets the average amount of trash for “free”		✓
Only people who dispose of “excess” trash pay out of pocket (paying for the burden their “excess” places on others)		✓
Residents who dispose of less-than-average solid waste actually make money		✓

WasteZero has programs available that enable cities to share the program benefits with residents, completely answering the “double tax” argument.

“Isn’t PAYT a hardship on low-income households?”

No. HERE’S WHY.

- Any household—*regardless of income*—has control over the amount of waste they generate and the amount they choose to recycle.
- A PAYT system gives households control over how high or how low their waste bill is.
- These smart moves can result in residents paying less for their trash than they would have with a fixed, flat-rate fee, especially when the EPA estimates that more than 70% of waste can be pulled out of the trash and be recycled (for free!).
- Not only is PAYT smart, but it’s fair. Variable rates remove the implicit subsidy to large waste generators, so if households are not large waste generators, they are more likely to see their bills go down than up.

PAYT

Allows for residents to lower their waste bills—sometimes lower than fixed rates!

Fixed Rate Fee

Locks every resident into one fixed rate fee, regardless of how little—or much—they throw away.

“Isn’t PAYT a hardship on low-income households?”

HERE’S HOW MALDEN, MA* ADDRESSED THE OBJECTION.

- Qualifying households receive a voucher redeemable for one box of 33-gallon PAYT trash bags for a 10-week period.
- Single person households receive a voucher redeemable for one box of 15-gallon bags for a 10-week period.
- To qualify, residents must provide:
 - Documentation of all sources of income showing total combined annual gross income for all occupants of the residence not exceeding 50% of the Boston area median family income
 - Proof of Malden residency
 - A physician’s form, if resident is disabled

APPLICATION FORM
MALDEN PAY-AS-YOU-THROW VOUCHER PROGRAM

All information submitted by applicants and obtained for verification will be confidential and used solely for the processing of the Malden Pay-As-You-Throw Voucher Program. If you need any assistance filling out this application please contact The Malden Redevelopment Authority at 781-324-5720.

Applicant Name:			
Address:			
Home Phone:	Work Phone:	Cell Phone:	
Email Address:			
What is the best way to contact you?		Mail	Phone
Do you own your residence?		Rent	Own

Have you applied for other types of assistance? If so, please list other assistance you receive: (Food Stamps, TANF, Section 8 Voucher, Utility Assistance, etc.)

Landlord Contact Information:

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*Please use one line for each source of income. If a household member has more than one source of income, this should be indicated on two different lines.

*This specific program was not executed by WasteZero.

“Isn’t PAYT a hardship on low-income households?” (Cont.)

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 - Proof of City residency
 - A physician’s form, if resident is disabled

HERE’S HOW TIVERTON, RI ADDRESSED THE OBJECTION.

- Households that earn less than \$22,000 per year and meet other program requirements may qualify for free bags.
- For those who qualify, residents will receive 25 bags for a six-month period or portion thereof.

“How do we enforce with automated collection services?”

Combining the convenience of enforcement technology and WasteZero Trash Metering™ bags with automated collection means instant operational efficiencies—and it’s easier than you may think.

CHALLENGE

Operators are constantly striving to increase efficiencies along their routes. Being faced with the challenges of monitoring enforcement technology may seem like “one more time-consuming step” in getting their jobs done.

SOLUTION

Enforcement technology is so efficient that operators no longer need to monitor bins outside of the truck.

- Non-compliance is now caught on video.
- GPS devices make reporting violators easy and instantaneous.



Combining the automated trucks and bins with the accountability inherent in plastic trash bags is not only possible, but an enormously effective and enforceable method of waste management.

“How do we enforce with automated collection services?” (Cont.)

- 1. Custom, approved bags make spotting violators quick and simple.**



- 2. Cameras attached to trucks automatically record video.**



- 3. GPSs provide the driver with all {city} addresses.**

- 4. Driver ensures that all addresses of non-compliant households are recorded and wirelessly sent to Customer Service.**



ADDRESS	DATE	STATUS	REMARKS	DATE	STATUS	REMARKS
X						
X						
X						
X						

- 5. The Customer Service team mails a warning letter to non-compliant households.**
6. Customer Service records non-compliant households in the data base.



- 7. Periodically, an enforcement manager will follow a pre-routed list of violators and inspect the contents of their container.**

Tickets and notices may be written for violators.



What is in it for WasteZero? What are their risks?

WasteZero is funded in two ways:

PROGRAM SALES

Program sales revenue funds

- Bag manufacturing
- Inventory
- Distribution
- Accounting

...all without cost to the city

DISPOSAL SAVINGS

Disposal savings is a function of program success and diminishing bag sales; WasteZero shares in the program's continued success as that success is reflected in disposal savings.

The City of Greensboro retains all recycling program income from increases in materials diverted from the landfill.

PAYT Pilot Program

Potential Challenges, Concerns, and Benefits

CHALLENGES	
Noncompliance	To bypass PAYT, residents from pilot neighborhoods can fill non-pilot carts.
Inaccurate data	Non-compliance impedes waste diversion, recycling performance, and reportable statistics.
Cost	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Bag manufacturing, inventory, and Retail Store Distribution™ can be problematic and less cost effective in small settings.• Financial savings, income, MSW reduction, and recycling benefits not fully reflected.
Under-represented location	Selection of pilot neighborhood may under-represent full program compliance, acceptance, and statistics
BENEFITS	
Serves as a beta test	Portends community acceptability and workability of PAYT
Simplifies official launch	Troubleshoots start-up and shortens distribution learning curve
Provides usable data	Provides data that may show partial waste diversion and increases in recycling volume
Sets the stage for expansion	Provides initial start-up location from which citywide PAYT expands